

---

**The Effects of Perceived Supervisor Support,  
Organisational Justice  
and Change Management Strategies in the Context of  
Organisational Restructuring.**

---

**By Andrew Sawers  
Supervisor: Dr Joana Pimentel**

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of:  
**Master of Science in Applied Psychology**

Department of Psychology,  
University of Canterbury, 2011

## Table of Contents

The Effects of Perceived Supervisor Support.....	1
Organisational Justice.....	1
and Change Management Strategies in the Context of Organisational Restructuring.....	1
By Andrew Sawers.....	1
Supervisor: Dr Joana Pimentel.....	1
Table of Contents.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	1
Abstract.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Organisational Justice.....	3
Change Management.....	5
Perceived Supervisor Support.....	7
Hypotheses.....	9
Method.....	12
Participants.....	12
Measures .....	12
Procedure.....	15
Analyses .....	15
Results.....	20
Hypothesis Testing.....	24
Post-Hoc Analyses.....	28
Discussion.....	30
Limitations.....	34
Future Research.....	35
Theoretical and Practical Implications .....	36
References.....	38
Appendix A.....	45
Survey Ordering 1.....	45
Appendix B.....	48
Survey Ordering 2.....	48
Appendix C.....	50
Survey Cover Letter.....	50

## **List of Tables**

The Effects of Perceived Supervisor Support,.....	1
Organisational Justice.....	1
and Change Management Strategies in the Context of Organisational Restructuring.....	1
By Andrew Sawers.....	1
Supervisor: Dr Joana Pimentel.....	1
Table of Contents.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	1
Abstract.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Method.....	12
Results.....	20
Discussion.....	30
References.....	38
Appendix A.....	45
Appendix B.....	48
Appendix C.....	50

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the help and support of a number of people, without whom the completion of this dissertation would not have been possible:

- First and foremost I would like to acknowledge my supervisor, Dr Joana Pimentel, for her support, knowledge, and advice throughout this year, and for all the time that she has contributed to this project.
- Both Paul O’Flaherty and Lesley Allan for so helpfully providing an organisation at which to conduct this study, and for their time and support.
- My APSY classmates for just being a great bunch of people.
- My family and my friends for being so supportive throughout my whole time at university.

## **Abstract**

This study sought to further our understanding of the antecedents of employee perceptions of organisational justice in the context of organisational restructuring. As such, this study focussed on the previously under-researched change management practices of support for downsizing victims and organisational communication quality, and the similarly under-researched organisational justice dimensions of interpersonal and informational justice, while also hypothesising a moderating effect of perceived supervisor support between these two sets of variables. Using an online survey, a total of 234 employees from a large New Zealand organisation in the Education sector were invited to participate in the study, with 71 volunteering to complete the online survey. The results showed no moderating effects of perceived supervisor support, but did show strong, significant main effects of victim support and communication quality on both interpersonal and informational justice. These findings highlight the importance of change management practices in maximising positive outcomes post-restructuring for the organisation and its employees.

## **Introduction**

As the competitive pressures facing organisations continue to increase in a fast paced and global economy, more and more organisations are responding by restructuring or downsizing their workforce. As a result, more than 6.5 million jobs have been downsized since December 2007 in the United States alone, with many other countries reporting similar figures (Datta, Guthrie, Basuil, & Pandey, 2010). While the desired results of workforce restructuring typically include improving organisational efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness, there are also a number of potential negative consequences (Brennan & Skarlicki, 2004). This is because restructuring processes have long lasting effects not only on the victims of the redundancies, but on the surviving employees as well (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). The reactions of surviving employees range from an understanding that restructuring is often a necessary part of business in the modern economy, to decreased motivation, performance, and commitment, as well as increased absenteeism, theft, and sabotage (Paterson & Carey, 2002). Given the high incidence of organisational downsizing and the associated economic and social implications, it is not surprising that the topic has received a great amount of attention in both the academic and popular press (Datta et al., 2010).

Survivor reactions to organisational change largely depend on the way in which the change is managed (Paterson & Cary, 2002). While much has been written on a conceptual level in this area (Cobb, Wooten, & Folger, 1995; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), there is a lack of research investigating the antecedents of survivor reactions to restructuring (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). In addition, the majority of this research has focussed on the nature of the organisational processes and procedures that influence survivor reactions, with little research considering the effects that social interactions and the way that downsized employees are treated have on survivor reactions (Kernan & Hanges, 2002).

The current study sought to address this research gap by investigating specific antecedents of survivor reactions to restructuring and how they relate to survivor perceptions of fairness in the restructuring context. Recent research in this area has yielded some interesting findings. For example, studies by Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, and Callan (2004), Kernan and Hanges (2002), and Paterson and Cary (2002) have examined multiple predictors and consequences of fairness perceptions and found that certain change management practices, such as organisational communication and offering support for laid-off staff, were associated with certain dimensions of fairness perceptions and subsequently had differential effects on various outcome variables. The current study sought to build on these findings by focussing on the variables most related to perceptions of employee treatment and the variables with the least exposure in the literature. As such, this study investigated the relationships between the change management practices of organisational communication and support for victims, and the organisational justice dimensions of interpersonal and informational justice, while also hypothesising the previously unexplored potential moderating effect of perceived supervisor support on these relationships. While the exact details of the current study will be described below, this paper will begin by discussing relevant empirical findings and issues within the current literature.

### ***Organisational Justice***

Organisational justice theories offer a meaningful framework for discussing employee perceptions of downsizing and have subsequently become one of the major theories in the research literature (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). Organisational justice can be broadly described as individuals' perceptions of fairness in organisations (Karriker & Williams, 2009). Organisational justice can be broken down into the four dimensions of distributive justice, procedural justice,

informational justice, and interpersonal justice (Kim, 2009). Distributive justice refers to the fairness of outcomes and is commonly focussed on issues relating to compensation and promotions (Karriker & Williams, 2009). More relevant to the context of downsizing are procedural justice, informational justice, and interpersonal justice.

Procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of the processes and procedures with which a decision is made (Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002). When employees perceive that decisions have been made in a fair manner, they report higher levels of organisational commitment, trust in managers, job performance, and fewer turnover intentions than employees who perceive the procedures as unfair (Schminke, Ambrose, & Cropanzano, 2000). Processes are perceived to be more fair when the affected employees have opportunities to voice their opinions or offer input to the decision making process (Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002), with Schminke et al. (2000) finding that higher levels of involvement in decision making processes by employees were associated with higher levels of procedural justice perceptions. Additionally, Leventhal (1980) identified six criteria that employees use to assess the fairness of procedures, which are the degree to which the procedures are consistent, bias free, accurate, correctable in the case of error, representative of all concerned, and based on prevailing ethical standards. Subsequent research has supported Leventhal's criteria (Folger & Cropanzano 1998; Singer, 1990).

Interpersonal justice refers to the fairness of the interpersonal treatment that one receives from an authority figure (Schminke et al., 2000). An authority figure is interpersonally fair to the extent that he or she treats employees with dignity and respect (Schminke et al., 2000) and provides subordinates with justifications or explanations for organisational decisions (Cropanzano et al., 2002). Past research has found significant positive relationships between employee perceptions of interpersonal fairness and job performance (Shanock & Eisenberger,



2006), willingness to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours (Karriker & Williams, 2009), and quality of relationships with supervisors (Schminke et al., 2000).

The final of the four dimensions of organisational justice, which has received considerably less attention in the extant research than have the preceding dimensions, is informational justice. Informational justice refers to the perceived fairness of organisational communications, as fostered by the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of the information received (Kim, 2009). The scarcity of research into informational justice is likely to be due to inconsistencies in the conceptualisation of the various dimensions of organisational justice, which has led to interpersonal justice and informational justice often being combined under the one dimension of interactional justice (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter, & Ng, 2001). However, Colquitt (2001) demonstrated that informational justice and interpersonal justice are empirically distinct constructs that exhibit differential effects on a number of individual and organisational outcome variables.

### ***Change Management***

As mentioned above, little research has been conducted that investigates the effects that social interactions and the way that employees are treated have on survivor reactions to restructuring processes (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). However, two important characteristics of change management programs have been noted that are relevant to this area. These are the quality of communication from the organisation and the quality of the support for the victims of redundancies (Kernan & Hanges, 2002; Paterson & Cary, 2002).

According to Bordia et al. (2004), uncertainty is one of the most common psychological states reported by employees in the context of organisational change. Uncertainty is described as an aversive state that motivates the employee to seek strategies aimed at reducing or managing it

(Bordia et al., 2004). A characteristic feature of employee uncertainty is a sense of doubt or confusion regarding future events and future states of the environment (Allen, Jimmieson, Bordia, & Irmer, 2007). Uncertainty has a number of negative consequences in the organisational setting, including increased stress (Pollard, 2001), increased turnover intentions (Johnson, Bernhagen, Miller, & Allen, 1996), decreased job satisfaction and decreased job commitment (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989). According to Bordia et al. (2004), these negative consequences of employee uncertainty are largely due to the feelings of a lack of control that uncertainty creates. Therefore, employees engage in information seeking strategies aimed at reducing uncertainty and asserting control over their work environment (Bordia et al., 2004).

Specific to the restructuring context, employees often report uncertainty regarding the possibility of redundancies, pay cuts, changes to organisational structure, and changes to promotion opportunities (Bordia et al., 2004). Therefore, because change communication can provide information that helps people understand and cope with the change process, it is understandable that employee uncertainty often results from ambiguous information, contradictory information, or from an overall lack of information (Allen et al., 2007). For these reasons, the provision of quality information through organisational communication constitutes a vital component of any change management plan and is one of the most commonly advocated strategies for reducing change-related employee uncertainty (Bordia et al., 2004). Despite this however, organisational change management practices often fail to fulfil their purpose of providing high quality information to employees (Allen et al., 2007). Bordia et al. (2004) argue that this is because the mere provision of information is often not sufficient to reduce employee uncertainty, but rather it is the perceived quality of that information that influences employees' appraisal of the change. Therefore, the current study chose to focus on employee perceptions of the quality of organisational communication, as characterised by the openness, helpfulness,

accuracy, timing, and completeness of the information provided to employees (Datta et al., 2010).

Organisational support for victims is another important factor in survivor reactions to downsizing (Paterson & Cary, 2002). This victim support may consist of providing outplacement services, counselling (Kernan & Hanges, 2002), establishing support mechanisms, training for new jobs, and/or financial compensation (Paterson & Cary, 2002). By providing such support, the organisation is demonstrating to the survivors that, despite the negative outcomes for the victims, the organisation still respects and values them and desires to minimise the severity of the loss suffered by the victims, thus demonstrating that the organisation is a caring and supportive employer (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). However, despite the intuitive nature of the link between this change management practice and survivor perceptions of fairness, there has been extremely little research investigating the effects of organisational support for victims (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). Therefore, the current study sought to add to the literature by investigating the effects of organisational support for victims on survivor perceptions of fairness.

### ***Perceived Supervisor Support***

Another key theory in the discussion of employee perceptions is organisational support theory (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). Organisational support theory is based on the norm of reciprocity, which asserts that when one person treats another well there is an obligation for the return of similarly favourable treatment (Eisenberger et al., 2001). When applied to the work setting, the reciprocity norm obliges employees to reciprocate favourable treatment they receive from their employing organisation by acting in ways valued by the organisation (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

According to organisational support theory, employees form general beliefs concerning the degree to which the organisation values their contributions and their well-being. Based on the reciprocity norm, the degree of this perceived organisational support (POS) then guides the extent to which the employee feels obliged to help the organisation reach its objectives (Eisenberger et al., 2001). As a result of these felt obligations, organisational support theory predicts that POS will be associated with many work related outcomes (Eisenberger et al., 2001). A recent meta-analysis of research on POS shows that POS has strong effects on many individual outcomes, including organisational commitment, job satisfaction, job performance, and turnover intentions (Riggle, Edmondson, & Hansen, 2009).

Just as employees form overall perceptions regarding the extent to which they are valued by the organisation, they also develop beliefs concerning the degree to which their supervisors value their contributions and well-being (Stinglhamber, De Cremer, & Mercken, 2006). Perceived supervisor support (PSS) refers to employees' perceptions regarding the level and quality of support that is available to them from their supervisor (Stinglhamber et al., 2006). PSS has also been shown to be associated with many individual outcomes including organisational commitment, job satisfaction, intentions to leave (Ng & Sorensen, 2008), and job performance (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski & Rhoades, 2002). However, despite their theoretical similarities, POS and PSS have been shown to work through different mechanisms (Stinglhamber et al., 2006). For example, POS has been linked with the procedural justice dimension of organisational justice, largely due to the diffuse, organisation-wide nature of organisational support perceptions, whereas PSS has been more closely linked with interpersonal and informational justice, due to the degree of influence that direct supervisors have on employee perceptions of interpersonal treatment and the quality of information received (Stinglhamber et al., 2006). Therefore, the current study investigated PSS as this construct is

more relevant than POS to the change management practices and organisational justice dimensions of interest.

### ***Hypotheses***

With all of the above in mind, the current study sought to investigate the links between survivors' perceived communication quality, perceived quality of support for victims, and perceived organisational justice in the context of organisational downsizing. As shown by Kernan and Hanges (2002), the effects that change management practices such as communication quality have on organisational outcomes occur through survivor perceptions of organisational justice. That is to say that communication quality influences organisational justice perceptions, which in turn influence outcomes such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, trust in management, and turnover intentions (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). In addition, it has been shown that different change management practices influence different dimensions of organisational justice (Kernan & Hanges, 2002). Most relevant to the current study is that communication quality and quality of support for victims have been linked with interpersonal and informational justice (Kernan & Hanges, 2002).

The current study also sought to investigate the potential moderating effect of PSS on the links between communication quality and the quality of support for victims and interpersonal and informational justice. While this potential moderating effect of PSS has not been researched before, it is thought to be worth investigating because in the case of organisational support for victims, it is possible that having a supportive supervisor may help enhance perceived support for victims, such that if survivors perceive their supervisor as supportive, then they may believe that the victims of the restructuring were treated fairly with respect to the quality of information received and treatment given during the downsizing process. This possibility is supported by the

underlying principle of PSS, in that employee perceptions of supervisor support are based on the level of work-related and emotional assistance provided to them by their supervisor (Ng & Sorenson, 2008). Therefore, where surviving employees experience high levels of supervisor support, they may then expect that the victims of the redundancies experienced similar work-related and emotional assistance from their respective supervisors. With this line of reasoning, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1: The relationship between support for victims and interpersonal justice will be moderated by PSS, such that, when perceived support for victims is low, employees exhibiting high levels of PSS will report higher levels of interpersonal justice than individuals with low levels of PSS. However, this difference in interpersonal justice will not be significant at high levels of support for victims.

H2: The relationship between support for victims and informational justice will be moderated by PSS, such that, when perceived support for victims is low, employees exhibiting high levels of PSS will report higher levels of informational justice than individuals with low levels of PSS. However, this difference in informational justice will not be significant at high levels of support for victims.

Similarly for communication quality, it is possible that supportive supervisors may provide information and explanations to employees where organisation-wide information is lacking, thus helping to decrease the effects of poor communication quality on justice perceptions.

Subsequently, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H3: The relationship between communication quality and interpersonal justice will be moderated by PSS, such that, when perceived communication quality is low, employees exhibiting high levels of PSS will report higher levels of interpersonal justice than individuals with low levels of PSS. However, this difference in interpersonal justice will not be significant at high levels of perceived communication quality.

H4: The relationship between communication quality and informational justice will be moderated by PSS, such that, when perceived communication quality is low, employees exhibiting high levels of PSS will report higher levels of informational justice than individuals with low levels of PSS. However, this difference in informational justice will not be significant at high levels of communication quality.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

The participants for this study were the surviving employees of a significant restructuring process at a large New Zealand organisation in the Education sector. A total of 234 employees currently working in the downsized departments were invited to participate in the study, with 71 volunteering to complete the survey. This corresponds to a response rate of 30%. Of the 71 participants, 30 were male and 41 were female. The ages of the participants ranged from 21 to 65 with a mean of 44, a standard deviation of 9.65, and an approximately normal distribution. The tenure of the participants ranged from 1 year to 31 years with a mean of 7, a standard deviation of 5.44, and a distribution that was approximately normal, but with a slight positive skew. In an effort to ensure the anonymity of the study and to maximise the response rate, age, gender and tenure were the only demographic variables collected for the purposes of this study.

### ***Measures***

Five separate scales (see Appendix A) with a total of 26 items, were used to measure the independent, moderator and dependent variables, with three additional demographic questions relating to age, sex, and tenure. The independent variables were the perceived level of support offered to the victims of redundancies by the organisation (victim support), and the perceived quality of communication from the organisation throughout the restructuring process (perceived communication quality). The moderator variable was perceived supervisor support and the dependent variables were perceived interpersonal justice and perceived informational justice.

As recommended by Paterson, Green, and Cary (2002), each scale was prefaced by a short paragraph explaining what each particular scale was intended to measure and what experiences the participants should be cognisant of when responding to the items of that scale.



According to Paterson et al. (2002), including this prefacing paragraph emphasises certain aspects of the restructuring process and allows the researchers to adapt the scales to the specific context of their research.

*Victim Support.* The perceived level of victim support was measured using 5 items, 3 of which were adapted from a 4-item scale created by Brockner, Grover, Reed, DeWitt, and O'Malley (1987). The fourth item of Brockner et al.'s (1987) scale, which reads "*Management continued the laid-off people's health and/or other kinds of insurance coverage after they were laid off*" was omitted as it was not relevant to the current study. In its full form, Brockner et al.'s (1987) scale has previously demonstrated a coefficient alpha of .80. The remaining two items used in the current study to measure the perceived level of victim support were adapted from a 10-item scale developed by Paterson and Carey (2002). Paterson and Carey (2002) designed this scale to measure a number of dimensions of employee perceptions of change procedures, including victim support. In its full form, Paterson and Carey's (2002) scale has demonstrated a coefficient alpha of .86. The two items adapted for the current study, which read "*Adequate procedures were established to handle any grievances about the change*" and "*Adequate support mechanisms and procedures were put in place to help the laid-off people cope with the change*" were included as they assessed a further area of victim support that was not measured by the other three items, thus improving the content validity of the measure. Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale, where a rating of 1 = *strongly disagree*, a rating of 5 = *strongly agree*, and a rating of 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*.

*Perceived Communication Quality.* The perceived level of communication quality was measured using a 6-item scale developed by Bordia et al. (2004). This scale has previously demonstrated a coefficient alpha of .94 (Bordia et al. 2004). Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale, where a rating of 1 = *strongly disagree*, a rating of 5 = *strongly agree*, and a rating

of 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*. A sample item is “*The information communicated adequately answered my questions about the changes*”

*Perceived Supervisor Support (PSS)*. The perceived level of supervisor support was measured using 7 items adapted from the 16-item short version of the Survey of Perceived Organisational Support (SPOS; Eisenburger et al., 1986). The SPOS was originally developed to measure perceived organisational support (POS), however because PSS and POS are similar constructs based on the same underlying theories, the most commonly used measure of PSS in the literature is the SPOS, with the word *organisation* substituted for *supervisor* in each item (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Using the SPOS to measure PSS in this way has demonstrated coefficient alphas ranging from .70 (Settoon, Bennet, & Lidon, 1996) to .92 (Hutchison, Valentino, & Kirkner, 1998). Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale, where a rating of 1 = *strongly disagree*, a rating of 5 = *strongly agree*, and a rating of 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*. A sample item is “*Help is available from my supervisor / manager when I have a problem*”.

*Interpersonal Justice*. The perceived level of interpersonal justice was measured using a 4-item scale developed by Colquitt (2001). This scale has previously demonstrated a coefficient alpha of .93 (Scott, Colquitt, & Zapata-Phelan, 2007). Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale, where a rating of 1 = *strongly disagree*, a rating of 5 = *strongly agree*, and a rating of 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*. A sample item is “*During the restructuring, I was treated with respect*”.

*Informational Justice*. The perceived level of informational justice was measured using a 4-item scale developed by Colquitt (2001). Colquitt’s (2001) measure of informational justice has previously demonstrated a coefficient alpha of .91 (Kim, 2009). Ratings were made on a 5-point Likert scale, where a rating of 1 = *strongly disagree*, a rating of 5 = *strongly agree*, and a rating of 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*. A sample item is “*The procedures were explained thoroughly to me*”.

## ***Procedure***

*Pilot Study.* Before the primary data collection, the survey was piloted on eleven psychology postgraduate students to check for clarity, ease of comprehension, and average completion time.

*Main Study.* The prospective participants were sent a cover letter (see Appendix C) via email that outlined the purpose of the study, assured anonymity of the participants, explained informed consent, and provided the contact details of the researchers. Common ethical issues, such as the anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of the data, were addressed by only gathering data through a voluntary and anonymous online self-report survey, thus the identities of all participants remained anonymous and the raw data was accessible only by the main researcher, and securely stored in a password-protected database. Additionally, participants were advised to cease participation and seek support services should they experience any distress while completing the survey. An electronic link to the online survey was provided at the end of the cover letter for those volunteering to participate to access the survey. The survey was hosted by Qualtrics' Survey Software website.

## ***Analyses***

Reliability analyses were conducted for each of the 5 scales using SPSS in order to obtain descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alphas as a measure of internal reliability (Hinkin, 1995). Corrected item total correlations (CITC), which indicate each item's correlation with the remaining items of that scale, were also examined as a measure of internal reliability (Hinkin, 1995). In addition, factor analyses were conducted on each of the scales to examine the

dimensionality of the scales (Hinkin, 1995). The results of these factor and reliability analyses will be explored in the results section.

A common concern for survey based research is the potential influence of common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Common method variance can be described as variance in responses that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs that the measures represent (Podsakoff et al., 2003). For example, one potential source of common method variance is known as social desirability bias. According to Podsakoff et al. (2003), social desirability bias influences research by causing participants to respond in ways that present themselves in a favourable light, regardless of their true feelings about an issue or topic. However, as Podsakoff et al. (2003) explain, one of the most effective methods for mitigating the potential influence of social desirability bias in survey research is by assuring the anonymity of the participants, which fosters more open and honest responses. Therefore, as the current research was anonymous, the influence of social desirability bias is likely to be minimised.

There are, however, other potential sources of common method variance that may influence responses for the current study, such as the context in which the items of the survey are placed (Podsakoff et al., 2003). These may include the effects of priming, whereby the previous items of the survey increase the salience of certain factors or issues and thus influence the participants' responses to subsequent items, or the effects of context-induced mood, whereby the mood induced by items at the beginning of a survey carries over to following items. One method for reducing such influences is by administering the survey in such a way that half of the participants complete the measures within the survey in one order and the other half of participants complete the measures in a different order (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Administering the survey in this way should have the effect of neutralising some of the method biases that are caused by the order that the items and measures are presented to the participants. With this

reasoning, the prospective participants were randomly split into two groups, with each group receiving the measures of the survey in different orders. Additionally, this method allows for the results of the two groups to be compared, thus assessing the equivalence of the different orderings of the measures and the influence of common method variance. The outcome of this analysis will be discussed below in the results and discussion sections.

Another potential source of common method variance for the current study comes from the application of scales measuring both the independent and dependent variables within the one survey (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Obtaining responses for both the independent and dependent variables within the same survey can influence responses in a number of ways. For example, previous research has shown that participants of survey research desire to appear consistent and rational in their responses and subsequently search for similarities in questions asked of them (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This can have the potential effect of creating relationships between certain variables that would not necessarily exist if the scales had been presented to the participants at separate times. Similarly, participants often possess assumptions concerning the relatedness of items and scales, which can also create artificial relationships between variables. As such, where scales measuring both the independent and dependent variables are administered to participants within the one survey, responses may be the result of not only the true relationships between the variables being measured, but also of the implicit theories that participants may have regarding the association of the variables (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

The level of influence of such common method variance can be assessed using various statistical techniques (Malhotra, Kim, & Patil, 2006). Harman's single-factor test, which involves subjecting all of the variables in the study to factor analysis, is arguably the most widely used approach for assessing common method variance (Malhotra et al., 2006). In this test, common method variance is assumed to exist if either, a single factor emerges from unrotated factor solutions, or the first factor explains the majority of the variance in the variables (Malhotra et al.,

2006). Therefore, the current study utilised Harman's single-factor test to assess the level of influence of common method variance, and the results of this will be detailed in the results section.

To test the hypotheses, moderator effects were examined using hierarchical multiple regression analyses. Because of the nature of hierarchical multiple regression analyses, multicollinearity is a potential problem that must be addressed. Multicollinearity can be defined as the existence of substantial correlations among a set of variables, which can make regression coefficients unstable and difficult to interpret (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). This problem of multicollinearity can be overcome by centering the independent and moderator variables prior to running any analyses (Cohen et al., 2003). Centering the variables involves subtracting the mean score from each raw score. Using centered independent and moderator variables reveals coefficients that are relatively unaffected by multicollinearity (Cohen et al., 2003). Therefore, each independent and moderator variable was centered for the current study. Following this, product terms were created by multiplying the moderator variable, perceived supervisor support, by each of the independent variables. These terms then represent the interaction between the moderator and each of the independent variables (Cohen et al., 2003).

After centering the variables and creating the interaction terms, hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted, in which interpersonal justice and informational justice were the dependent variables. The centered independent variables and moderator variable were then entered into the equation in three successive steps. For example, in order to test hypothesis 1, step 1 of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis included interpersonal justice as the dependent variable and victim support as the independent variable. For step 2, the moderator variable, perceived supervisor support, was introduced to the equation. Finally, in step 3, the relevant interaction term (victim support X perceived supervisor support) was also introduced. The moderation hypothesis is supported if the unstandardised coefficient of the interaction term

is both different from zero and statistically significant (Cohen et al., 2003). The results of these analyses will be explored in the results section.

## Results

The descriptive statistics for all variables are presented in Table 1. As can be seen in Table 1, participants reported high levels of supervisor support, with a mean of 3.64 and a good standard deviation of .91. Conversely, participants reported low levels of victim support, communication quality and informational justice, with means of 2.52, 2.71 and 2.79 respectively. With the exception of victim support, all variables showed good levels of variation in responses, with standard deviations ranging from .80 to .91, which are only slightly below one scale point.

The slightly lower standard deviation of .67 for victim support could potentially be due to the inherently negative nature of the variable, when compared to the other variables of interest. It is possible that participants would be less likely to perceive the level of support offered to victims in a favourable light due to the underlying fact that the victims have lost their jobs. This would restrict the variance in responses by lowering the participants' ratings of victim support.

Table 1:  
*Descriptive Statistics for all Variables*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>Range</b>
Victim Support	2.52	.67	1.25	4.25	3
Communication Quality	2.71	.80	1.5	4.67	3.17
Supervisor Support	3.64	.91	1.43	5	3.57
Interpersonal Justice	3.10	.89	1.5	5	3.5
Informational Justice	2.79	.90	1	5	4
Sex			1	2	1
Age	43.55	9.65	21	65	44
Tenure	7	5.44	1	31	30

*Note:* N=71

Before testing the hypotheses, reliability analyses and factor analyses were conducted for each scale to investigate the internal consistency and dimensionality of the scales. Table 2 shows the results of the reliability analyses for each scale. As can be seen in Table 2, only the victim



support scale exhibited low internal consistency, with each of the other scales showing good or excellent Cronbach's alpha levels, ranging from .86 to .93. The victim support scales' problem with internal reliability is demonstrated by the low Cronbach's alpha of .64, which is below the minimum level of .70 recommended by Hinkin (1995). However, the low reliability is attributed to the negative corrected item total correlation (-.06) of item 1, which indicates that this item is negatively correlated with the rest of the items in the scale. When item 1 is removed from the scale, the Cronbach's alpha is raised to .75. Furthermore, factor analysis identified item 1 as loading primarily on a separate factor to the other items. Therefore, item 1 was removed from the scale for any further analyses. As Table 2 shows, removing item 4 of the interpersonal justice scale would also improve the Cronbach's alpha of that scale, raising it from .86 to .92. However, this item was retained for further analyses due to the good Cronbach's alpha for the scale with the item included and the acceptable mean (2.94), standard deviation (1.14), and corrected item total correlation (.48) of the item.

Table 2:

*Scale Statistics for all Scales*

<b>Item no.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>	<b>CITC</b>	<b>Alpha if Deleted</b>
<i>Victim Support (Alpha .64)</i>				
1	3.14	.66	-.06	.75
2	2.32	.98	.50	.54
3	2.42	.77	.50	.55
4	2.45	.95	.48	.55
5	2.89	.85	.58	.50
<i>Communication Quality (Alpha .87)</i>				
1	2.96	1.08	.73	.85
2	2.42	1.02	.72	.85
3	2.46	1.01	.68	.85
4	2.8	1.08	.75	.86
5	2.63	1.09	.62	.87
6	2.99	.80	.62	.87

<i>Supervisor Support</i> (Alpha .93)				
1	3.48	1.15	.78	.92
2	3.61	1.18	.71	.93
3	3.66	1.08	.85	.92
4	3.80	1.04	.66	.93
5	3.42	1.09	.84	.92
6	3.85	1.05	.84	.92
7	3.66	.93	.81	.92
<i>Interpersonal Justice</i> (Alpha .86)				
1	3.42	.89	.77	.80
2	3.08	1.01	.86	.76
3	2.93	1.16	.78	.79
4	2.94	1.16	.48	.92
<i>Informational Justice</i> (Alpha .87)				
1	2.76	1.13	.76	.82
2	3.14	1.00	.74	.83
3	2.82	1.11	.72	.83
4	2.42	.96	.67	.85

The correlation matrix for all scales and demographic variables is presented in Table 3. As Table 3 shows, significant correlations were found between each of the independent variables and each of the dependent variables. These results add weight to previous findings in which path analyses were conducted indicating that change management practices, including victim support and communication quality, have causal effects on interpersonal and informational justice (Kernan and Hanges, 2002). However, causality cannot be inferred from this study's correlational data alone. No significant correlations were found between supervisor support and any other variable, suggesting that supervisor support is unrelated to all other variables included in this study. Interestingly, a significant correlation was found between tenure and victim support ( $r = -.25, p < .05$ ), and possible reasons for this relationship will be outlined in the discussion section below.

Table 3:

*Correlations and Coefficient Alphas for all Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Victim Support	(.75)						
2. Communication Quality	.50**	(.87)					
3. Supervisor Support	.06	.03	(.93)				
4. Interpersonal Justice	.39**	.44**	.23	(.86)			
5. Informational Justice	.39**	.55**	-.05	.44**	(.87)		
6. Sex	.11	.05	-.15	.08	-.05		
7. Age	-.10	.11	-.08	.04	-.05	-.0	
8. Tenure	-.25*	-.10	.04	.12	-.03	.6	.41*
						-.1	
						0	

Note: N=71; \*p < .05. \*\*p < .01.

Factor analyses of all five scales showed that, after the removal of item 1 from the victim support scale, each scale loaded on a single main factor that was explaining the majority of the variance in responses, with the second largest factor for each scale falling below an eigenvalue of 1, as recommended by Hinkin (1995). As discussed above, factor analysis was also conducted in order to assess the level of systematic measurement error attributable to common method variance. Harman's single-factor test (Malhotra et al., 2006) was utilised, in which common method variance is assumed to exist if a single factor emerges from unrotated factor solutions, or the first factor explains the majority of the variance in the variables (Malhotra et al., 2006). As Table 4 shows, this factor analysis revealed 5 separate factors with eigenvalues above 1. Table 4 also shows that the first factor did not explain the majority of the variance, with the 4 remaining factors explaining more variance than the first factor. Importantly, the items of each scale loaded predominantly on a single factor, demonstrating that each scale was independent of the others. This indicates that common method variance was not a substantial problem for the current study.

Table 4:

*Factor Analysis for Harman's Single Factor Test*

<b>Component</b>	<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>% of Variance</b>	<b>% Cumulative</b>
1	7.22	28.88	28.88
2	5.22	20.90	49.78
3	1.94	7.77	57.55
4	1.67	6.69	64.24
5	1.48	5.93	70.17

As discussed above, the prospective participants were randomly split into two groups, with the first half of the participants completing the measures in one order and the second half of participants completing the measures in a different order (see Appendix A and Appendix B). A Levene's test for homogeneity of variances was conducted to assess the assumption that these two randomly assigned groups were identical. Mean scores for the interpersonal justice scale were significantly higher for those participants who completed survey 2 ( $M = 12.78$ ,  $SD = 3.06$ ) than for those participants who completed survey 1 ( $M = 11.87$ ,  $SD = 4.10$ ), with the Levene's test indicating unequal variances ( $F = 4.11$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Possible reasons for this difference will be discussed below in the discussion section. All other scales showed no significant differences between the two participant groups.

***Hypothesis Testing***

The procedure for hierarchical multiple regression described in the method section was carried out to test each of the hypotheses. The results of these analyses are outlined in the text below, as well as in the corresponding Tables 5-8.

*Hypothesis 1.* Hypothesis 1 stated that the relationship between support for victims and interpersonal justice will be moderated by PSS, such that, when perceived support for victims is

low, employees exhibiting high levels of PSS will report higher levels of interpersonal justice than individuals with low levels of PSS. However, this difference in interpersonal justice will not be significant at high levels of support for victims. Results of the hierarchical multiple regression for hypothesis 1 are presented in Table 5 and show that this hypothesis was not supported. In step 1 of the hierarchical multiple regression, victim support was significantly related to interpersonal justice. However, both supervisor support and the interaction term were not significant in step 2 and 3. Thus, hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Even though hypothesis 1 was not supported, the results nevertheless show a significant main effect of victim support on interpersonal justice, with an  $R^2$  value of .15 indicating that victim support explains 15% of the variance in responses for the interpersonal justice scale.

Table 5:

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 1*

	<b>b</b>	<b>SEb</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Change</b>	<b>F Change</b>
<i>Step 1</i>				.15	.15	12.01**
Victim Support	.51	.15	.39**			
<i>Step 2</i>				.19	.04	3.67
Victim Support	.49	.14	.37**			
Supervisor Support	.12	.06	.21			
				.19	.00	.05
<i>Step 3</i>	.48	.15	.37*			
Victim Support	.12	.06	.21			
Supervisor Support	.01	.03	.03			
PSS X Victim						

Note. DV = Interpersonal Justice. \*p<.05. \*\*p<.01.

*Hypothesis 2.* Hypothesis 2 stated that the relationship between support for victims and informational justice will be moderated by PSS, such that, when perceived support for victims is low, employees exhibiting high levels of PSS will report higher levels of informational justice than individuals with low levels of PSS. However, this difference in informational justice will not be significant at high levels of support for victims. Results of the hierarchical multiple

regression for hypothesis 1 are presented in Table 6 and show that this hypothesis was not supported. Again, step 1 showed victim support to be significantly related to the dependent variable, informational justice. However, steps 2 and 3 also showed that supervisor support and the interaction term were not significant, thus hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Even though hypothesis 2 was not supported, the results nevertheless show a strong main effect of victim support on informational justice, with an  $R^2$  value of .15 indicating that victim support explains 15% of the variance in responses for the informational justice scale.

Table 6:

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 2*

	<b>b</b>	<b>SEb</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Change</b>	<b>F Change</b>
<i>Step 1</i>				.15	.15	12.59**
Victim Support	.52	.15	.39**			
<i>Step 2</i>				.16	.01	.38
Victim Support	.53	.15	.40**			
Supervisor Support	-.04	.06	-.07			
				.16	.00	.15
<i>Step 3</i>						
Victim Support	.52	.15	.39**			
Supervisor Support	-.04	.06	-.08			
PSS X Victim	.01	.03	.05			

Note. DV = Informational Justice. \*p<.05. \*\*p<.01.

*Hypothesis 3.* Hypothesis 3 stated that the relationship between communication quality and interpersonal justice will be moderated by PSS, such that, when perceived communication quality is low, employees exhibiting high levels of PSS will report higher levels of interpersonal justice than individuals with low levels of PSS. However, this difference in interpersonal justice will not be significant at high levels of perceived communication quality. Table 7 shows that this hypothesis was also not supported. Step 1 showed communication quality to be significantly related to interpersonal justice. Step 2 showed that supervisor support was also significantly related to interpersonal justice, when controlling for communication quality. The  $R^2$  change for

step 2 of was significant ( $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ,  $p < .05$ ), demonstrating that adding supervisor support to the model significantly improved the model. However, as with the previous hypotheses, including the interaction term, did not significantly improve the model and therefore hypothesis 3 was not supported.

Even though hypothesis 3 was not supported, the results nevertheless show a significant main effect of communication quality on interpersonal justice, with an  $R^2$  value of .19 indicating that communication quality explains 19% of the variance in responses for the interpersonal justice scale.

Table 7:

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 3*

	<b>b</b>	<b>SEb</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Change</b>	<b>F Change</b>
<i>Step 1</i>				.19	.19	16.35**
Communication Quality	.32	.08	.44**			
<i>Step 2</i>				.24	.05	4.26*
Communication Quality	.32	.08	.43**			
Supervisor Support	.12	.06	.22*			
<i>Step 3</i>				.26	.02	1.33
Communication Quality	.29	.08	.40**			
Supervisor Support	.12	.06	.21			
PSS X Comm	.02	.01	.13			

Note. DV = Interpersonal Justice. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

*Hypothesis 4.* Hypothesis 4 stated that the relationship between communication quality and informational justice will be moderated by PSS, such that, when perceived communication quality is low, employees exhibiting high levels of PSS will report higher levels of informational justice than individuals with low levels of PSS. However, this difference in informational justice will not be significant at high levels of communication quality. Table 8 shows that this hypothesis was not supported. Step 1 showed that communication quality was significantly related to informational justice. However, steps 2 and 3 showed that both supervisor support and

the interaction term were not significantly related to informational justice, when controlling for the other variables in the models.

Even though hypothesis 4 was not supported, the results nevertheless show a strong main effect of communication quality on informational justice, with an  $R^2$  value of .30 indicating that communication quality explains 30% of the variance in responses for the informational justice scale.

Table 8:

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Hypothesis 4*

	<b>b</b>	<b>SEb</b>	<b><math>\beta</math></b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Change</b>	<b>F Change</b>
<i>Step 1</i>				.30	.30	29.21**
Communication Quality	.41	.08	.55**			
<i>Step 2</i>				.30	.00	.37
Communication Quality	.41	.08	.55**			
Supervisor Support	-.04	.06	-.06			
<i>Step 3</i>				.31	.01	.96
Communication Quality	.43	.08	.58**			
Supervisor Support	-.03	.06	-.05			
PSS X Comm	-.01	.01	-.10			

Note. DV = Informational Justice. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

***Post-Hoc Analyses***

Given the strong, significant main effects of communication quality and victim support on both dimensions of justice, post-hoc regression analyses were conducted to test whether communication quality and victim support independently explain variance in the justice dimensions. Table 9 shows the results of the first post-hoc analysis, which show that in step two, the inclusion of communication quality to the model significantly increases the  $R^2$  from .15 to .32. This demonstrates that the addition of communication quality to a model including victim



support perceptions significantly increases the variance explained in informational justice, from 15% to 32%.

Table 9:

*Post-Hoc Regression Analysis for Informational Justice*

		<b>b</b>	<b>SEb</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Change</b>	<b>F Change</b>
<i>Step 1</i>					.15	.15	12.59**
	Victim Support	.52	.15	.39**			
<i>Step 2</i>					.32	.17	16.20**
	Victim Support	.22	.15	.55			
	Communication Quality	.35	.09	.47**			

*Note.* DV = Informational Justice. \*p<.05. \*\*p<.01.

Similarly, Table 10 shows the results of the second post-hoc analysis, which demonstrate that the addition of communication quality to a model including victim support perceptions significantly increases the variance explained in interpersonal justice, from 15% to 23%. Implications of these findings will be outlined in the discussion section below.

Table 10:

*Post-Hoc Regression Analysis for Interpersonal Justice*

		<b>b</b>	<b>SEb</b>	<b>β</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>R Square Change</b>	<b>F Change</b>
<i>Step 1</i>					.15	.15	12.01**
	Victim Support	.51	.15	.39**			
<i>Step 2</i>					.23	.08	7.10*
	Victim Support	.29	.16	.22			
	Communication Quality	.24	.09	.33*			

*Note.* DV = Interpersonal Justice. \*p<.05. \*\*p<.01.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the potential moderating role of perceived supervisor support in the relationships between the change management practices of support for downsized employees and organisational communication, and the organisational justice dimensions of interpersonal justice and informational justice, in the context of organisational restructuring. This potential moderating role of perceived supervisor support is one that had not previously been investigated in this context and past research on organisational justice had typically focussed on the dimension of procedural justice, largely ignoring interpersonal and informational justice. As such, this study contributes to the organisational change literature by examining the moderating role of PSS on the relationship between perceptions of downsizing victims' support, communication quality, and two organisational justice dimensions: interpersonal and informational.

Based on previous research indicating that change management practices such as victim support and organisational communication are antecedents of organisational justice (Kernan & Hanges, 2002), each of the four hypotheses proposed supervisor support as a moderator between these two sets of variables. The hierarchical multiple regression analyses conducted to test each of the hypotheses showed that no significant moderator effects were found and thus, none of the hypotheses were supported.

There may be several reasons why these moderator effects were not found. Firstly, considering the length of the questionnaire and the analyses performed, the sample size of 71 may have been too small to detect any moderator effects, as hierarchical multiple regression is often cited as requiring large sample sizes for even weak effects to be observed (Cohen et al., 2003). Secondly, it is possible that the size of the organisation may affect the ability of supervisor support to influence the relationships between change management practices and

justice perceptions. Previous research in this area has shown that contextual factors, such as organisation size, influence a number of variables, including organisational justice perceptions (Ambrose & Schminke, 2003; Schminke et al., 2000). As Schminke et al. (2000) explain, larger organisations typically have more hierarchical organisational structures, more bureaucratic processes, and more disruptive organisational politics. As such, is it possible that in larger organisations, such as the one used for the current study, supervisors have less opportunities, freedom or resources available to offer the levels of support necessary to influence the relationships between organisation-wide change management practices and employee justice perceptions. Therefore, it may be the case that no moderator effects or main effects between supervisor support and justice perceptions were found in this study due to the size of the organisation used. Furthermore, it is possible that a similar study conducted in a smaller organisation may reveal significant moderator effects of perceived supervisor support, as well as significant main effects between supervisor support and justice perceptions.

Similarly, due to cultural and structural characteristics, some supervisors may not possess sufficient autonomy and decision-making scope to elicit independent assessments of organisational support and supervisory support (Schminke et al., 2000). In this particular case, it is possible that the role of supervisors throughout the restructuring process was simply to relay information from the Senior Management Team, and that their ability to provide additional support and information was limited. Hence, it is possible that this moderator effect is contingent upon the culture, structure, and even the industry in which the organisation operates. These assumptions will require further empirical corroboration.

Even though the hypotheses were not supported, there were nevertheless some interesting findings from the above analyses. Firstly, when testing hypothesis 3, which hypothesised that the relationship between communication quality and interpersonal justice would be moderated by PSS, the addition of supervisor support to a model including communication quality adds a

modest, yet significant amount of variance explained in interpersonal justice. Even though a significant  $R^2$  change was not found for step 3, where the interaction term was added to the model, this significant  $R^2$  change for step 2 nevertheless provides evidence for the importance of supervisor support to employee perceptions of interpersonal justice. This finding fits well with the theoretical base of supervisor support, where the provision of important information from supervisor to subordinate would be expected to lead to employee's perceiving themselves as more highly valued by their supervisor (Stinglhamber et al., 2006) and subsequently, an increase in perceptions of interpersonal justice would also be expected, due to the favourable supervisory treatment (Colquitt, 2001). This finding is especially interesting because it demonstrates that supervisors are important sources of change information, over and above organisation-wide information, which adds to other similar studies showing the differential roles of supervisors from the organisations they represent (Stinglhamber et al., 2006). However, as mentioned previously, the size and structural characteristics of the organisation surveyed may have undermined the influence of supervisor support on the variables of interest.

As discussed above, post-hoc regression analyses were conducted to test whether communication quality and victim support independently explain variance in the justice dimensions. These post-hoc analyses provide evidence for the independent and significant impact of employee perceptions of victim support and communication quality on both interpersonal and informational justice perceptions. This adds support to findings of studies such as those by Kernan and Hanges (2002) and Paterson and Carey (2002), which demonstrate the importance of victim support and communication quality to employee perceptions of organisational justice.

Another interesting finding was the significant correlation between tenure and perceptions of victim support, ( $r = -.25$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The negative correlation indicates that as tenure increases, perceptions of the quality of victim support decrease. Or to put it another way,

employees with longer tenure perceived the quality of victim support to be lower than those with shorter tenure. One possible reason for this significant correlation is that employees who have remained with the organisation for a long period of time generally are the most invested in the organisation and the status quo, and also generally have the greatest familiarity with other employees within the organisation (Caldwell, Liu, Fedor, & Herold, 2009). With this greater familiarity, it is likely that employees with longer tenure would experience more negative effects from seeing their colleagues laid-off than newer employees. These negative effects may include a greater impact from the loss of friends and social networks, and any perceived mistreatment of friends and colleagues, as well as a greater impact from the subsequent change in organisational norms resulting from the downsizing (Shah, 2000). As a result of these heightened negative effects, it is plausible that employees with longer tenure would subsequently perceive the level of support offered to victims to be lower.

Prospective participants were randomly split into two groups and separate surveys containing identical measures but in different orders were administered to the groups. Because the prospective participants were randomly assigned to one of the two groups, any significant differences in responses between the groups are likely to be a result of the measurement method (Podsakoff et al., 2003). As noted in the results section, scores for the interpersonal justice scale were significantly higher for those participants who completed survey 2 than for those participants who completed survey 1. While the exact reasons for this are unknown, it is possible to speculate as to why this significant difference may have occurred. One possibility is that because the interpersonal justice scale was placed after the perceived supervisor support scale for survey 2 and before it for survey 1, participants completing survey 2 were then primed by the supervisor support scale to remember their supervisor's actions when responding to the interpersonal justice scale. Even though the interpersonal justice scale was prefaced by a paragraph explaining that the participants should be cognisant of their treatment by the senior

management team, as opposed to their direct supervisor or manager, it is possible that responding to the supervisor support scale nevertheless affected their latter responses to the interpersonal justice scale. This possibility is supported by the descriptive statistics for the supervisor support scale, where the mean score was 3.64 out and a standard deviation of .91, indicating that the majority of participants perceived high levels of support from their supervisor. Therefore, participants completing survey 2 may have been primed to remember the favourable treatment provided to them by their supervisor when responding to the interpersonal justice scale, whereas participants completing survey 1 may have focussed more on the senior management team.

### ***Limitations***

As noted above, one limitation of this study is the small sample size. Because the statistical power necessary to detect significant moderator effects, such as those hypothesised in this study, often requires large sample sizes (Cohen et al., 2003), it is possible that the non-significant results obtained in this study are a product of an insufficient sample size. The causes of this low sample size are twofold. Firstly, because the restructuring at the organisation used for this study was a staggered process and some departments were still completing this process at the time of the research, only surviving full-time employees of departments that had completed the initial stages of the process and who had regular access to email services were given the opportunity to participate, thus substantially decreasing the number of prospective participants. This was done to ensure that the participants of the study were only those employees who would have access to the online survey and who knew that they were not being made redundant as a result of the restructuring process and thus fit the category of surviving employees.

The second cause of the low sample size for this study was a low response rate of 30%. This is well below the 50% benchmark regarded as desirable by Babbie (2007). Possible reasons for this low response rate include the sensitive nature of the topic under investigation,

prospective participants not completely trusting or understanding the anonymity of the study, despite anonymity being assured, and the fact that this study was being conducted by a university student and not by a reputable research company. However, survey-based organisational change research is well-known for obtaining low response rates (Moates, Armenakis, Gregory, Albritton, & Feild, 2005).

Another potential limitation of this study is that the victim support measure used in this study was adapted from two previously developed scales. Adapting this measure from items developed by Brockner et al., (1987) and Kozlowski (1993), was done to more accurately reflect the context of the current study and to more completely assess the construct of interest. However, because this adapted measure was not created through the rigorous scale development methods recommended by Hinkin (1995), it is possible that validity of the measure may have been compromised.

### ***Future Research***

Further research is needed to investigate the influence of perceived supervisor support on organisational justice and the relationships with various change management practices. This future research would benefit from obtaining larger sample sizes, especially if similar moderator hypotheses are proposed. This would allow for greater confidence in the results obtained from the research. Conducting such research could expand on this study's finding that perceived supervisor support adds a significant amount of additional information to the model when predicting interpersonal justice, over and above the influence of communication quality alone.

One suggestion for future research would be to investigate the possibility discussed above, where it was posited that smaller organisations may provide an environment that is more conducive for the moderator hypotheses investigated in this study. Comparing the results of similar studies conducted in differently sized organisations could present some interesting

findings. Additionally, future research would benefit from the development and validation of a scale for victim support perceptions that measures the complete construct.

A further direction for future research would be to investigate whether leader-member exchange (LMX) influences the degree to which employees perceive their supervisors as supportive during change. As LMX is an expression of the quality of the relationship between leader and subordinate (Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007), it is likely that the level of LMX will effect the supervisor's ability to influence employee justice perceptions. Such future research could build upon a recent study by Farr-Wharton and Brunetto (2007), which utilised social exchange theory in explaining the effects of LMX on employee acceptance of organisational change. Similarly, future research investigating the potential influence of the consistency of supervisors' LMX quality, both between and within subordinates, may show some interesting and informative results.

### ***Theoretical and Practical Implications***

The results of this study reinforce the importance of change management practices, such as victim support and organisational communication, for the formation of employee justice perceptions during organisational restructuring. The significant relationships found between the specific facets of change management and organisational justice incorporated in this study, constitute an important addition to the literature, as these facets have been under-researched thus far. Additionally, given that these two change management practices explained 32% and 23% of the variance in informational and interpersonal justice respectively, this study also serves to highlight the magnitude of these relationships.

This has substantial practical implications for future restructuring processes. Firstly, because past research has found significant relationships between interpersonal and



informational justice and outcome variables such as employee performance (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006) and willingness to engage in organisational citizenship behaviours (Karriker & Williams, 2009), organisations need to take steps to ensure that these justice perceptions are not compromised. The results of this study highlight the importance of victim support and organisational communication to this process, and to some extent the significant influence of supervisor support to employee perceptions of interpersonal justice. As such, it would be recommended for organisations embarking in restructuring processes to offer training to supervisory and management staff, to ensure that these staff members are cognisant of the importance of their positions to the success of the change management process and to ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide this support to their subordinates.

Additionally, the results of this study indicate that future restructuring processes may benefit from taking steps to minimise any potential negative effects stemming from the possibility of employees with longer tenures perceiving the level victim support as lower than other employees, as these longer serving employees will have an integral part in ensuring the future success of the organisation post-restructuring (Caldwell et al., 2009). These steps may include running workshops with longer serving employees when developing victim support services, or simply offering tenure-based tiered severance packages, such that longer serving victims receive substantially greater severance packages than newer victims.

This research has aimed to contribute to the change management and organisational justice literatures by exploring relatively under-researched facets of these two areas and by also investigating the potential moderating effect of perceived supervisor support. Even though no moderator effects were found, potential reasons were discussed above and avenues for future research were proposed that may help elucidate the exact relationships between these sets of variables and their contextual environment. As such, this study constitutes a valuable and worthwhile contribution to the change management and organisational justice literatures.

## References

- Allen, J., Jimmieson, N. L., Bordia, P., & Irmer, B. E. (2007). Uncertainty during organizational change: Managing perceptions through communication. *Journal of Change Management*, 7(2), 187-210.
- Ambrose, M. L. & Schminke, M. (2003). Organization structure as a moderator of the relationship between procedural justice, interactional justice, perceived organizational support, and supervisory trust. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(2), 295-305.
- Ashford, S. J., Lee, C., & Bobko, P. (1989). Content, causes, and consequences of job insecurity: A theory-based measure and substantive test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32, 803-829.
- Babbie, E. R. (2007). *The practice of social research* (11th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Brennan, A. & Skarlicki, D. P. (2004). Personality and perceived justice as predictors of survivors' reactions following downsizing. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34(6), 1306-1328.
- Brockner, J., Grover, S., Reed, T., Dewitt, R., & O'Malley, M. (1987). Survivors' reactions to layoffs: We get by with a little help for our friends. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 32(4), 526-541.

- Bordia, P., Hobman, E., Jones, E., Gallois, C., & Callan, V. J. (2004). Uncertainty during organizational change: Types, consequences, and management strategies. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 18*(4), 507-532.
- Caldwell, S., Liu, Y., Fedor, D. B., & Herold, D. M. (2009). [Why are perceptions of change in the “eye of the beholder”? The role of age, sex, and tenure in procedural justice judgments.](#) *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol 45*(3), 437-459.
- Cobb, A., Wooten, K., & Folger, R. (1995). Justice in the making: Toward understanding the theory and practice of justice in organizational change and development. *Research in Organizational Change and Development, 8*, 243–295.
- Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (2003). *Applied multiple regression/correlation analysis for the behavioral sciences* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Mahwah, N.J.
- Colquitt, J. A., Conlon, D. E., Wesson, J. D., Porter, C. O. L. H., & Ng, K. Y. (2001). Justice at the millennium: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(3), 425-445.
- Colquitt, J. A. (2001). On the dimensionality of organizational justice: A construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*(3), 386-400.
- Cropanzano, R., Prehar, C. A., & Chen, P. Y. (2002). Using social exchange theory to distinguish procedural from interactional justice. *Group and Organization Management, 27*(3), 324-351.

Datta, D. K., Guthrie, J. P., Basuil, D. & Pandey, A. (2010). Causes and effects of employee downsizing: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management*, 36, 281-348.

Eisenberger, R., Huntington, R., Hutchison, S., & Sowa, D. (1986). Perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71(3), 500–507.

Eisenberger, R., Armeli, S., Rexwinkel, B., Lynch, P. D., & Rhoades, L. (2001). Reciprocation of perceived organisational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(1), 42-51.

Eisenberger, R., Stinglhamber, F., Vandenberghe, C., Sucharski, I. L., & Rhoades, L. (2002). Perceived supervisor support: Contributions to perceived organizational support and employee retention. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(3), 565-573.

Farr-Wharton, R. & Brunetto, Y. (2007). Organisational relationship quality and service employee acceptance of change in SMEs: A social exchange perspective. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 13(2), 114-125.

Folger, R. & Cropanzano, R. (1998). *Organizational justice and human resource management*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Johnson, J. R., Bernhagen, M. J., Miller, V., & Allen, M. (1996). The role of communication in managing reductions in work force. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 24, 139-164.

Hinkin, T. R. (1995). A review of scale development practices in the study of organisations. *Journal of Management*, 21(5), 967-988.

Hutchison, S., Valentino, K. E., & Kirkner, S. L. (1998). What works for the gander does not work as well for the goose: The effects of leader behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 28, 171–182.

Karriker, J. H. & Williams, M. L. (2009). Organizational justice and organizational citizenship behavior: A mediated multifoci model. *Journal of Management*, 35(1), 112-135.

Kernan, M. C. & Hanges, P. J. (2002). Survivor reactions to reorganization: Antecedents and consequences of procedural, interpersonal, and informational justice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(5), 916–928.

Kim, H. (2009). Examining the role of informational justice in the wake of downsizing from an organizational relationship management perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 88, 297–312.

Kozlowski, S. W. J., Chao, G. T., Smith, E. M., & Hedlund, J. (1993). Organizational downsizing: Strategies, interventions, and research implications. In C. L. Cooper & I. T. Robertson (Eds.), *International review of industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 263–332). Chichester, England: Wiley.

Leventhal, G. S. (1980). What should be done with equity theory? New approaches to the study of fairness in social relationships. In K. Gergen, M., M. Greenberg, & R. Willis (Eds.),

*Social exchange: advances in theory and research.* (pp. 27-55). New York: Plenum Press.

Maertz, C. P., Griffeth, R. W., Campbell, N. S., & Allen, D. G. (2007). The effects of perceived organizational support and perceived supervisor support on employee turnover. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 28, 1059-1075.

Malhotra, N. K., Kim, S. S., & Patil, A. (2006). Common method variance in IS research: A comparison of alternative approaches and a reanalysis of past research. *Management Science*, 52(12), 1865-1883.

Moates, K. N., Armenakis, A. A., Gregory, B. T., Albritton, M. D. & Field, H.S. (2005). Achieving content representativeness in organizational diagnosis: Use of action groups for successful organizational change. *Action Research*, 3(4), 403-416.

Ng, T. W. H. & Sorensen, K. L. (2008). Toward a further understanding of the relationships between perceptions of support and work attitudes. *Group & Organisation Management*, 33(3), 243-268.

Paterson, J. M., Green, A., & Cary, J. (2002). The measurement of organizational justice in organizational change programmes: A reliability, validity and context-sensitivity assessment. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 75, 393-408.

- Paterson, J. M. & Cary, J. (2002). Organizational justice, change anxiety, and acceptance of downsizing: Preliminary tests of an AET-based model. *Motivation and Emotion*, 26(1), 83-103.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J., & Podsakoff, N.P. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: A critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879-903.
- Pollard, T. M. (2001). Changes in mental well-being, blood pressure and total cholesterol levels during workplace reorganization: The impact of uncertainty. *Work & Stress*, 15(1), 14-28.
- Rhoades, L. & Eisenberger, R. (2002). Perceived organizational support: A review of the literature. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(4), 698-714.
- Riggle, R. J., Edmondson, D. R., & Hansen, J. D. (2009). A meta-analysis of the relationship between perceived organizational support and job outcomes: 20 years of research. *Journal of Business Research* 62, 1027–1030.
- Schminke, M., Ambrose, M. L., & Cropanzano, R. S. (2000). The effect of organizational structure on perceptions of procedural fairness. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(2), 294-304.
- Scott, B. A., Colquitt, J. A., & Zapata-Phelan, C. P. (2007). Justice as a Dependent Variable: Subordinate Charisma as a Predictor of Interpersonal and Informational Justice Perceptions. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 92(6), 1597–1609.

- Settoon, R. P., Bennett, N., & Liden, R. C. (1996). Social exchange in organizations: Perceived organizational support, leader–member exchange, and employee reciprocity. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 81*, 219–227.
- Shah, P. P. (2000). Network destruction: The structural implications of downsizing. *Academy of Management Journal, 43*(1), 101-112.
- Shanock, L. R. & Eisenberger, R. (2006). When supervisors feel supported: relationships with subordinates' perceived supervisor support, perceived organizational support, and performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 91*(3), 689–695.
- Singer, M. (1990). Determinants of perceived fairness in selection practices: An organizational justice perspective. *Genetic, Social & General Psychology Monographs, 116*(4), 477-495.
- Stinglhamber, F., De Cremer, D., & Mercke, L. (2006). Perceived support as a mediator of the relationship between justice and trust. *Group & Organization Management, 31*(4), 442-468.
- Weiss, H. & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective Events Theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes and consequences of affective experiences at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 18*, 1-74.



## Appendix A

### *Survey Ordering 1*

#### *Interpersonal Justice:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the way that you feel the people who implemented the changes treated you, namely the Senior Management Team, and the way that treatment made you feel.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
During the restructuring, I was treated in a polite manner.	1	2	3	4	5
During the restructuring, I was treated with dignity.	1	2	3	4	5
During the restructuring, I was treated with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
During the restructuring, the Senior Management Team refrained from making improper remarks or comments.	1	2	3	4	5

#### *Communication Quality:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the quality of the information communicated to you regarding the restructuring.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The information communicated was useful.	1	2	3	4	5
The information communicated adequately answered my questions about the changes.	1	2	3	4	5
The information communicated was positive.	1	2	3	4	5
The information was communicated appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
The information communicated was timely.	1	2	3	4	5
The information communicated was accurate.	1	2	3	4	5

*Victim Support:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the level of support offered by the University to those employees who were made redundant as a result of the restructuring.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The severance pay that the University offered to the laid-off people was a generous amount.	1	2	3	4	5
Management tried to help the laid-off people find a comparable job elsewhere in the University.	1	2	3	4	5
Management tried to help the laid-off people find a comparable job outside of the University.	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate procedures were established to handle any grievances about the change.	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate support mechanisms and procedures were put in place to help the laid-off people cope with the change.	1	2	3	4	5

*Perceived Supervisor Support:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the how supportive your direct supervisor/manager has been throughout the change process.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My supervisor / manager strongly considers my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5
Help is available from my supervisor / manager when I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor / manager really cares about my well-being.	1	2	3	4	5
Even if I did the best job possible, my supervisor / manager would fail to notice.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor / manager cares about my general satisfaction at work.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor / manager shows very little concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor / manager cares about my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5

*Informational Justice:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the way in which the information regarding the change was communicated to you by those implementing the change, namely the Senior Management Team.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Senior Management Team has been candid in their communications with me.	1	2	3	4	5
The procedures were explained thoroughly to me.	1	2	3	4	5
The explanations regarding the procedures were reasonable.	1	2	3	4	5
The Senior Management Team seemed to tailor their communications to individuals' specific needs.	1	2	3	4	5

*Victim Support:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the level of support offered by the University to those employees who were made redundant as a result of the restructuring.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The severance pay that the University offered to the laid-off people was a generous amount.	1	2	3	4	5
Management tried to help the laid-off people find a comparable job elsewhere in the University.	1	2	3	4	5
Management tried to help the laid-off people find a comparable job outside of the University.	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate procedures were established to handle any grievances about the change.	1	2	3	4	5
Adequate support mechanisms and procedures were put in place to help the laid-off people cope with the change.	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix B

### *Survey Ordering 2*

#### *Informational Justice:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the way in which the information regarding the change was communicated to you by those implementing the change, namely the Senior Management Team.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The Senior Management Team has been candid in their communications with me.	1	2	3	4	5
The procedures were explained thoroughly to me.	1	2	3	4	5
The explanations regarding the procedures were reasonable.	1	2	3	4	5
The Senior Management Team seemed to tailor their communications to individuals' specific needs.	1	2	3	4	5

#### *Perceived Supervisor Support:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the how supportive your direct supervisor/manager has been throughout the change process.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My supervisor / manager strongly considers my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5
Help is available from my supervisor / manager when I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor / manager really cares about my well-being.	1	2	3	4	5
Even if I did the best job possible, my supervisor / manager would fail to notice.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor / manager cares about my general satisfaction at work.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor / manager shows very little concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5
My supervisor / manager cares about my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5

*Communication Quality:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the quality of the information communicated to you regarding the restructuring.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The information communicated was useful.	1	2	3	4	5
The information communicated adequately answered my questions about the changes.	1	2	3	4	5
The information communicated was positive.	1	2	3	4	5
The information was communicated appropriately.	1	2	3	4	5
The information communicated was timely.	1	2	3	4	5
The information communicated was accurate.	1	2	3	4	5

*Interpersonal Justice:*

For the following questions, we are interested in your opinion of the way that you feel the people who implemented the changes treated you, namely the Senior Management Team, and the way that treatment made you feel.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
During the restructuring, I was treated in a polite manner.	1	2	3	4	5
During the restructuring, I was treated with dignity.	1	2	3	4	5
During the restructuring, I was treated with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
During the restructuring, the Senior Management Team refrained from making improper remarks or comments.	1	2	3	4	5

## Appendix C

### *Survey Cover Letter*

Good Morning,

You are invited to participate in an **anonymous** research survey. The aim of this research is to further our understanding of factors that influence employee perceptions of fairness in the context of organisational restructuring.

**This survey is anonymous, and you will not be identified as a participant.** If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Please note that this research is being carried out as a requirement for a Master of Science degree by Andrew Sawers under the supervision of Dr Joana Pimentel. Additionally, please note that the results of all Masters' degree research are publically available through the UC Library database. However, please be assured that no information identifying any individual will be collected and therefore no individual can be identified as a participant.

If you have any questions about this research, please contact either Andrew Sawers at [acs98@uclive.ac.nz](mailto:acs98@uclive.ac.nz) or Joana Pimentel on 364 2987 ext 3635 or [joana.pimentel@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:joana.pimentel@canterbury.ac.nz). This research has approval from the Canterbury Human Ethics Committee.

**By completing the questionnaire it will be understood that you have consented to participate in the project, and that you consent to publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved.**

Should you experience any distress while completing the survey, you can stop at any stage and should you require any support services please contact your manager, HR advisor, or union.

**If you wish to participate in this study, please click the link below.**

Regards,

Andrew Sawers